

September 2016 VSP Newsletter

Hi folks! This is the monthly installment of a Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) informational newsletter. Please sign up to receive the newsletter [here](#). Feedback is welcome at beller@scc.wa.gov.

JOINT VSP TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON AUGUST 31, 2016: The VSP Technical Panel (TP) and Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) met on August 31, 2016 and discussed a number of issues, including Skagit County's draft work plan, Grant County's data gathering efforts for their work plan, and the definition of agricultural viability. The TP and SAC are still discussing these topics. Notes from that meeting are being developed. Presentations and documents discussed at the meeting are available on either the [TP web page](#) or [SAC web page](#) - please check there for more details. The meeting was in-person and webinar format.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2016 JOINT MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL AND STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The next joint meeting of the TP and SAC will be September 27, 2016, from 8am-12pm. The in-person meeting locations will be in Lacey and Colville, and the meeting will also be available by webinar. Full details will be available on the [TP web page](#) or [SAC web page](#). Please register for VSP Technical Panel & Statewide Advisory Committee meeting on Sep 27, 2016 8:00 AM PDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2089522170055481603>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

VSP MONTHLY CONSULTANT Q&A: The monthly teleconference/webinar for all those interested in VSP at a statewide level is coming up on **Thursday, September 8**. This conference call is meant to be a Q & A on VSP for all 27 VSP opt-in counties. The purpose of the call is to be a forum to disseminate information about VSP on a statewide level and to answer VSP related questions. It is open to any who want to phone in, but mainly directed at County staff, Conservation District staff, and consultants and facilitators responsible for VSP. The next call is **Thursday, September 8, from 9am-9:30am**. Links to past webinar recordings are available on the [VSP Workgroups web page](#).

VSP MEDIA PACKAGE UPDATE: The VSP media packet (press releases, etc) is available for you to use. It can be found [here](#). It includes typical media kit items, including a program fact sheet, links to more information, logos, and links to recent news articles.

VSP REIMBURSEMENTS: Remember, the Commission's agency policy requires monthly reimbursement requests for all VSP contracts (as well as any other contracts). We have noticed that there are quarterly requests being sent in. Monthly reimbursement requests

allow entities to stay on top of expenses and contract end dates. So, please remember to voucher monthly for VSP expenses.

VSP ON PUBLIC LANDS: A question has arisen among the work groups about if VSP applies to public lands, or how public lands and what happens on them affect agricultural viability on private lands for VSP purposes. For example, if public lands next to private lands do not allow grazing and the lack of grazing increases underbrush which contributes to wildfire that affects private agricultural lands and producers. The Commission's position is that VSP does not directly apply to public lands. VSP applies where agricultural activities intersect with critical areas in a county. The main purpose of VSP is to protect critical areas and maintain agricultural viability. The lack of grazing which leads to wildfires which affects critical areas or agricultural viability is something that could be analyzed in the work plan in the context of protection of the critical areas or in maintaining agricultural viability in the county. If public lands are affecting agricultural viability, the work group should explain the effect in the work plan. Are there any strategies that could be crafted to mitigate activities on public lands in the county that affect agricultural viability? Are those strategies within the control of the VSP work group? This is the kind of analysis that would be part of the work plan.

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